

## **MRS. MARY HAYMAN – AN APPRECIATION BY SYDNEY ABEYKOON**

I came to know Mrs. Hayman long before I joined Guru as a student in the Lower Fourth Class. My father was teaching Sinhala at Guru and he was living in one of the married quarters set aside for Staff. Mrs. Hayman used to visit the married quarters of the Staff at least every other week. She inquired about the health and welfare of the entire family of the Staff Member. We all knew how she cared about the health and food of the students. She was very concerned about the cleanliness of their living conditions. She was particular that the Dorms and the toilets including the night toilets were regularly swept and washed and maintained properly. She was equally concerned that the kitchen, the food stores, the pantry, and the dining room were spotlessly clean. She ensured that these areas were washed every weekend with detergents. She was in charge of the sick room and the Isolation Ward. The sick room had a regular stream of boys each evening, to be treated for their colds and coughs with the mixtures; to be dressed for their invariable cuts and bruises earned during the regular sporting activities each evening. The Isolation Ward came in to use when boys in large numbers contacted infectious illnesses in the nature of chicken pox, mumps and measles. The boys loved being her in-door patients when suffering from any of such illnesses or common fevers. Unlike their mums at home who put them on starvation diet, Mrs. Hayman insisted on the boys being served with a hefty plate of regular rice and curry. She together with Dr. Hayman supervised the weekly attendance in the sick room of Dr. Blaze, the medical practitioner from Welimada who was the Physician attending to the needs of the College and who was responsible for the immunizations and inoculations that had to be administered at various ages.

Mrs. Hayman was also very concerned about the garden and orchard and their orderly maintenance. She had a pet Deer at one time by the name of Rani and was very attached to her. Although Dr. and Mrs. Hayman had no children of their own the hundreds of boys who passed through Guru were made to feel that during the College Term the places of their parents were taken by this couple. Indeed the two of them definitely felt that they were morally obliged to take on that mantle. Whilst Mrs. Hayman was of the very strong view that the boys in their charge must have proper food and health care etc. and every thing had to be done to make them happy whilst in College she was equally of the very strong view that for the sake of the students the entire staff must also be treated in the same way. That is why as I said before she paid regular visits to the Staff Quarters. Few people would know that she did not stop at inquiring about the health of the wife and children of the Master. She went in to the toilets, bath rooms, bed rooms and kitchen. She inspected all these areas on every one of her visits. She made sure that the electricity and water service was in order. If she found that any of these services required attention she made sure that the maintenance department of the College sent the Electrician, Plumber, Carpenter or Mason the same day to have the short coming rectified. On one occasion she dropped in to see us, my mother was cooking in the kitchen. Mrs. Hayman would walk in to the kitchen without any hesitation and continue to chat to my mother.

Although my father was not very fluent in English and more comfortable with Sinhala, on the other hand my mother was able to carry on a conversation with her in English.

When Mrs. Hayman found that my mother kept standing during the entire time it took her to prepare the meal in the kitchen, Mrs. Hayman on her return made sure that a stool from Dr. Hayman's Physics Lab was requisitioned and sent for my mother. Mrs. Hayman took a great interest in the Staff and as Guru was for both of them, their home, continued to take an interest in the Staff even during the holidays. I am now in my sixties. Mrs. Hayman died at the age of 94. I knew her when I was a small boy between the ages of 9 and 16 ie, about 45 years ago.. My memories of her are still fresh. She was such a gentle soft spoken and gracious lady. I have never seen her angry. Such people cannot be found any more. All those who were fortunate to know her and Dr. Hayman will always carry those very special memories. For all the love comfort and care she gave those hundreds at Guru may she be blessed with absolute and everlasting peace in her final resting place.

Sydney Abeykoon (1958-1963)  
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